

THE REMINISCENCES OF CARL SCHURZ
occupied by my division during that murderous
conflict, around
me the dead bodies of men who, but three days
ago, had cheered
me when I rode along their front, and whose
greetings I had
responded to with sincere affection, the
features of some of
whom I now succeeded in recognizing after a
painful effort;
some officers whom I had known well, with whom
I had talked
often, and who now lay here, struck down in the
flower of their
young manhood, now horrible to look at like the
rest—and
over yonder, only a few paces away, some
Confederate dead,
whom their comrades had left on the field, now
looking just
like our men, and having in all probability died
with the same
belief in the justice of *their* cause. Was it
possible that any
of them should have been sincerely convinced of
the righteous-
ness of the cause they fought for—the cause of
slavery? I had
to say to myself that it was possible, and in
many cases even
certain; for did I not know from history that in
many religious
wars men had cut one another's throats with the
fierceness of
fanatical conviction concerning differences of
opinion on doc-
trinal points which to-day would call forth from
any educated
person only a smile of pity? I rode away from
this horrible
scene in a musing state of mind, finally composing
myself with
the reaffirmed faith that in our struggle against
slavery we
could not possibly be wrong; that there was an
imperative, in-
disputable necessity of fighting for our cause;
that the belief

of the rebels in the righteousness of their cause
might be ever
so sincere, and that they might individually
deserve ever so
much credit for that sincerity, but that their error
stood offen-
sively in the way of justice, and that their
challenge had to be
met.

There were more harrowing experiences in
store for me
that day. To look after the wounded of My
command, I visited
the places where the surgeons were at WQirk.
At Bull Run, I